

ALCUIN COLLEGE POLICY: HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PREVENTION

(Reviewed August 2024)

Alcuin College continuously develops strategies to make students feel valued, respected and connected within the school community. This will include the protection of the students' physical safety, social connectedness and inclusiveness, as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their appearance, gender, race, culture or religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, while remaining consistent with the school's cultural perspectives and philosophical values.

Students who feel respected, accepted and connected tend to be physically and mentally healthier, and perform better academically. They tend to have fewer incidents of violent or "acting out" behaviour, be less sexually active, have a lower rate of "experimentation", with or "use" of, drugs and alcohol.

(Preventing Bullying and Ensuring Safe and Caring School Communities – Level 1; Province of British Columbia, 2013, p. 13)

Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy

The safety and wellbeing of children in independent schools is of paramount consideration. Children deserve to be protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harm or threat of harm. Therefore, Alcuin College will ensure that children attending our school will experience a learning environment that enables every child to feel safe, accepted and respected.

Underpinnings

Alcuin College recognizes that discrimination and harassment of any kind has no place in the school community. Alcuin College is a community whose interrelationships are governed by mutual respect, shared responsibility and accountability. The school strives to develop the whole person – intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally – in an atmosphere of caring and respect.

Definition

Bullying is a pattern of repeated actions targeted at a person in a deliberate manner, intended to reduce the perceived power that person has over the situation or to harm that person. All acts of bullying have the characteristics of being dehumanizing, intimidating, humiliating, threatening, and evokes fear of physical harm or emotional distress in the person being targeted.

Bullying encompasses a wide range of behaviours within a relationship between a dominant and a less dominant person or group where:

- An imbalance of the perceived power is manifest through aggressive actions.
- Physical or psychological (verbal and social) abuse occurs.
- Negative interactions occur directly (face-to-face) or indirectly (gossip, exclusion).

- Negative actions occur with intent to harm, which can include some or all of the following:
 - a) Physical actions such as punching, kicking, biting and initiating unwanted sexual touching, can hurt the person's body, damage belongings or make the person feel badly about himself or herself;
 - b) Verbal actions such as threats, name calling, insults, racial and cultural slurs or inappropriate jokes and/or comments. Also includes sexual harassment that is when a person or group hurts another person by taunting or discussing sensitive sexual issues, creating sexual rumours or messages, and making derogatory comments on a person's perceived sexual identity;
 - c) Social exclusion such as spreading rumours, ignoring, gossiping, excluding.
- Negative actions are repeated and/or the intensity or the duration of the actions establishes the bully's dominance over the person. The person thus becomes a victim of injustice.
- Information and communication technologies are used to physically threaten, verbally harass or socially exclude an individual or group.

Policy Programme

Alcuin College has in place protocols that outline roles, responsibilities and procedures for staff, students and other adults (including parents) that address bullying.

Education, Awareness and Prevention

- Education and awareness on bullying includes ways to recognize its pattern and characteristics versus normal peer conflict
- Instruction to students that emphasizes respect and compassion for others and age appropriate behaviours to prevent or respond to bullying
- Instruction to students on their responsibility to report and take an active stand against acts of bullying including reference to the school's code of conduct as it relates to bullying

Reporting

- Students should report incidents of bullying to Alcuin College staff or anonymously online (<https://erasereportit.gov.bc.ca/>)
- The Head of School will investigate allegations of bullying
- Incidents of bullying at school (bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment including student-to-student sexual harassment, intimidation, threatening or violent behavior) will be tracked
- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students will be our first priority. Student and parent concerns regarding student safety will be taken very seriously, and action will be taken to resolve these concerns.

Responding to Bullying

- Clear and logical consequences for those who bully, that provides support for those being bullied and intervention with students who bully
- Parents of children involved in a bullying incident will be informed, engaging their support and collaboration to seek a resolution

- In deciding a course of action the school weighs the consequences by age and maturity of the individuals involved, the degree of harm done, incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved and the context in which the incident(s) occurred

Building a School Community

There are many strategies and activities that are employed within a school to enable students to feel safe, accepted and respected.

Alcuin College

- Engages parents and school supporters in the educational and co-curricular programs and school life of the enrolled students
- Promotes open communication among staff, students, families and communities
- Encourages parents to share their culture and expectations
- Proactively connects with those students, along with their family, who are experiencing academic or social challenges.
- Communicates expectations, values and norms that support positive health and academic behaviour in the school community
- Acknowledges students by name
- Promotes visibility within the school during class transitions, breaks, before/after school
- Finds ways to acknowledge students for their contributions in the school community, including those where improvement comes only in small increments.

Commitment to Protect: Alcuin College will continuously develop strategies to make students feel valued, respected and connected within our school community. This will include the protection of the students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression, while remaining consistent with Alcuin College's philosophical values.

Commitment to Shield against Retaliation: Alcuin College will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who has made a complaint of a breach of this policy. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students will be our first priority. Student and parent concerns regarding student safety will be taken very seriously, and action will be taken to resolve these concerns. Students engaged in behaviours that interfere with the general welfare of other students, or the learning environment, or that reflect negatively on the school and its values, may be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences will depend on the severity and frequency of the incident(s) and may include parental notification, suspension from school activities and classes, involvement of the police and/or expulsion.